

FAST BLAST



OUR MISSION: "Make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians."

DIANA FUENTES-MICHEL, Executive Director, California Student Aid Commission

March 13, 2009

A message from Executive Director, Diana Fuentes-Michel

I am pleased to report that the 2009-10 Budget was signed by the Governor on February 20, 2009. Although the 2009-10 Budget was signed early, May Revisions will be considered. The Cal Grant Program was not reduced as originally proposed in the 2009-10 Budget. Major adjustments included in the budget are noted below.

Cal Grant Programs

- The Cal Grant Program received a \$174.1 million General Fund increase due to current-year surge in renewals, higher than expected new awards, and anticipated undergraduate fee increases for UC and CSU; and \$24 million to backfill the use of one-time Student Loan Operating Fund resources.
- The maximum income levels for 2009-10 were incrementally increased to the appropriate amounts instead of being held at the current year levels.
- Funding included the full systemwide fee anticipated increases at UC and CSU and the maximum award at non-public institutions of \$9,708.

APLE

- The Commission is authorized to issue 7,200 new awards.

Student Loan Operating Fund

- The State Controller's Office is authorized to use the moneys in the Student Loan Operating Fund for loans to the General Fund with interest to be paid on all moneys loaned to the General Fund. However, this does not authorize any transfer that will interfere with the carrying out of the objective for which the Student Loan Operating fund was established.

Consolidation and Decentralization

- The budget did not include the Administration's proposals to consolidate the functions of the

California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) and the Commission through a reorganization proposal and to decentralize the administration of financial aid, including Cal Grants, to the higher education segments. This reorganization was intended to eliminate duplicative handling of financial aid awards, reduce administrative costs at the segment level, eliminate duplicative overhead costs in state operations and creates a one-stop packaging of financial aid intended to benefit students. The Administration did not specify how the proposals would be implemented. (NOTE: Further discussion of the Administration's proposals may occur during Legislative hearings this spring. These proposals require Legislative approval.)

State to make postponed 2008-09 payments

On Friday, March 6, 2009, the State Controller announced that, effective immediately, the State will make all postponed payments as quickly as cash in the Treasury allows.

According to the Controllers press release, the controller anticipates having all of the State's delayed payments made within the next several weeks on a "first in, first out" basis with March payments made as scheduled.

The Commission will continue to process paper checks until there is no longer a delay in funding. It is our intention to reinstate EFT processing once notified by the State Controller that normal funding has resumed.

Commission to remain open during furlough days

Friday, March 6, 2009, was the final day that State offices were closed for furlough. After this date, all offices will remain open for business on a regular schedule, allowing employees to choose the days they will take off, subject to supervisor approval.

Cal Grant GPA appeal process

State law allows students who did not file an on-time certified GPA Verification Form due to circumstances beyond their control to submit an appeal to the Commission for consideration. All appeals must be submitted using the [Late GPA Verification Form](#).

Competitive Grants

Late GPA appeals for Competitive Cal Grant applicants must be received by March 22, 2009.

Entitlement Grants

CSAC is required to notify all Entitlement Cal Grant applicants who did not file an on-time GPA. Postcards and emails will be sent to those applicants. Late GPA appeals for Entitlement Cal Grant applicants must be received by May 18, 2009.

2009-10 Cal Grant award cycle

The Commission will begin processing March 2nd Entitlement Cal Grant awards this week and will notify students. Awards will continue to be processed on a weekly basis. Stay tuned for specific processing dates in an upcoming Operations Memo.

WebGrants for Students

Are your students wondering if their Cal Grant GPA has been received by the Commission? If they have filed a 2009-2010 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), they can go online and check the status of their Cal Grant application by logging on to [WebGrants for Students](#) and creating an account.

This secure site will allow them to view the status of their Cal Grant or Chafee application, update their address, view payment history or tell us if they are changing their school.

Please encourage your students to use WebGrants for Students.

2009-10 Paper GPAs

The Commission is processing thousands of March 2nd paper GPA Verification Forms. It will take a few weeks to finish processing and keying them into our system. Once completed, we will process additional Entitlement awards and the March 2nd Competitive award cycle.

2009-10 Chafee Grant online application is available

The 2009-10 Chafee application is available for new students. To date, 789 students have applied online. The 2009-10 Needs Analysis should be available in May.

2008-09 APLE Application Status

The Commission allocated 7,200 APLEs for the 2008-09 academic year. To date, we have received approximately 2,700 applications leaving over 4,000 allocations unused. A list of institutions with designated allocations and applications submitted is listed on our web site at www.csac.ca.gov. Follow the links to Financial Aid Programs and then APLE. We encourage participating schools to continue submitting applications before the June 30, 2009 deadline.

Community College September 2nd Deadline

Community college students must submit their Cal Grant GPAs by the September 2, 2009 deadline and will be accepted only if certified by a community college that they are enrolled for the Fall 2009 term. Students must also file a FAFSA before the September 2nd deadline. No transcripts are accepted. The fastest and most secure way for a student to submit his or her Cal Grant GPA is to have his or her school electronically upload the GPA directly to the WebGrants system.

WebGrants Real Time is Here

We have completed the testing phase of the real time online roster payment changes and plan to migrate and release this new feature to the WebGrants system next Monday. The real time online roster will provide financial aid administrators the ability to update payments, make school changes and correct errors immediately.

Learn about the details in an upcoming Operations Memo to be released soon.

Accepting Marmaduke Award nominations

Do you know someone who is an exceptional motivator for students and exhibits excellent skills in counseling students to pursue an education beyond high school? Are they strong advocates of the financial aid tools that are available to support students' educational goals? The Commission is accepting nominations for the annual Arthur Marmaduke High School Counselor Award. If you know of a counselor whose performance results in an exceptional number of students receiving financial aid as a direct result of their counseling efforts, your high school principal can nominate them to receive this prestigious award. Additional information about the Arthur Marmaduke High School Counselor Award can be located at [2008-09 Arthur Marmaduke Award](#).

The Commission remains dedicated to keeping you apprised of any new information that may affect our programs. Please forward your ideas and comments to Fastblast@csac.ca.gov